

No 17

Ely Trembling for the Ark of God:

O R,

*The Religious Duty of being Concerned for the present
State of the Protestant Religion, Incumbent upon all,
but chiefly upon the Clergy and the Magistracy.*

A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D at the
A S S I Z E S held at *Chelmsford*
in *Essex*, on *July 15, 1714.*

Before the Right Honourable

Sir Thomas Parker, Kt.

Lord Chief Justice of *England*,

A N D

Sir Littleton Powis, Kt.

One of the Judges of the Queen's Bench.

By *John Armand Dubourdieu*, Rector of *Sawtre*
Moins, in the County of *Huntingdon*, one of the
Ministers of the French Church in the *Savoy*,
and Chaplain to His Grace the D. of *Devonshire*.

*Published at the unanimous Request of the High Sheriff,
and the Gentlemen of the Grand Inquest.*

The Second Edition. ⊕

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in *Westminster-hall*, 1714.



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To the Right Worshipful

Sir *Henry Fetherston*, Bt.

High Sheriff of the County of *Essex*;

A N D

Sir *Henry Bendish*, Bt. Foreman.

SIR Thomas Webster, Bar.

Thomas Middleton,

Fisher Tench,

Robert Western,

Robert Honeywood,

Samuel Tufnel,

Lemyng Rebow,

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Richard Lestock,

John Sewell,

Josias Kinsman,

Cromwell Desborough,

William Blackburn,

John Eldred,

Esq;

Gentlemen of the Grand Inquest.

Gentlemen,

THIS Sermon being Published at Your unanimous Request, it will be thought no Presumption in me, to say, it hath Title to Your Patronage.

I am sensible, the only thing that recommended it to Your Favour, was the seasonableness of the Subject, and that Vein of Zeal for the Protestant Religion, which run through all the Parts of it. Had you considered it in another Point of View, it would doubtless, have missed of the Honour of your Suffrages: But it was my good Fortune, to deliver it before Religious Hearers, whose Piety (only attentive to the Concern, I expressed for the present State of the Ark of God) over-looked all its Defects.

The DEDICATION.

I beg leave to tell you, that thereby You have given a full Proof of Your excellent Character, and Dispositions: For tho' the meanness of this Discourse, may Impeach the Judgment of the Approvers; yet, the Approbation you honoured it with, meerly upon the account of the Subject, is a shining Instance of your firm Adherence, and inviolable Attachment to the true Interest of Your Country.

And 'tis with incredible Pleasure, that I am permitted, to grace the Head of this Discourse with such a bright, and numerous List of Gentlemen of the best Estates, and Figures in Your County; all resolved to sacrifice their Lives and Fortunes, for the Preservation of our happy Constitution, in Church and State.

The Opinion of a Sermon, heard with some satisfaction, often sinks in the Reading: But I hope, that when in the Perusal of this, You find any thing shocking to Nice and Critical Eyes, you'll remember, that You heard it at Chelmsford with Indulgent, and Charitable Ears.

And here, I take my leave of You, with my hearty Thanks for the Favours I have received from You, as also with my hearty Prayers for Your Prosperity. I am,

Gentlemen,

Your very Affectionate,

Obliged, Humble Servant,

John Armand Dubourdiere

1 Sam. IV.†13.

For his Heart trembled for the Ark of God.

TIS Usual for Men, who live in the outward Communion of the true Church, to challenge God's Protection, as their Property, tho' their Life is the very *Reverse* of his Laws. They lay claim to the Benefits of his *Covenant*, tho' they do not perform the Conditions of it. They look upon the true Doctrine, which they profess, as an *Exemption* from Moral Duties; and as implying a Toleration of their Crimes, or a Sanctuary, which screens them from God's avenging Justice. They foolishly imagine, they can enjoy the *Privileges* of Religion, separately from its *Graces*; and impiously confident, they expect the Blessings which attend the strict Observance of God's Precepts, at the very time they are themselves guilty of such heinous Sins, as call for the *Infliction* of the greatest Punishments.

Foolish Stupidity! to think, that God is bound to be propitious to them, and load them with Benefits and Favours, notwithstanding their high Crimes, and notorious Offences.

This was the Case of *Israel* in the History before us. *Ely*, who at that time, under the Title of Judge, was the chief Governor of that People, was a good, and pious Man, and zealous for the Honour of Religion. But through the *Facility*, or Weakness of his Temper, he had unfortunately been too remiss a Magistrate, and too indulgent a Father.

His Sons, whose Proneness to Sin should have been curbd and curbd by wholesome Severities, had been abandon'd to their own Devices, and had prostituted their

their sacred Character, to the most infamous sensual Satisfactions: And (as the Prince's Vices are apt to become the *Fashions* of the People, or, as when the Fountains of publick Edification are tainted with Pollution, the Infection grows general) the Corruption in a very little time, stole into all the Veins of the political Body, insomuch, that by the Prevalency of the Leader's Example, the Nation was soon over-run with Wickedness and Impiety.

At a Juncture of time, so fatal to the Prosperity of a People, *Israel* goes out to engage the *Philistines*. But God not going out with them, great Numbers of them fell in the Field, and they were entirely defeated. So grievous a Calamity, (one would think) should have set them upon *considering their ways*, and turning back to the Lord of Hosts. But instead of this, they fall to repining and murmuring; *Wherefore*, say they, *bath the Lord smitten us before the Philistines?*

And then they think of a Stratagem, which was much easier, than reforming their Lives, and Conversation: which they foolishly imagine would infallibly repair their Loss, and retrieve their Honour: That was fetching the *Ark* from *Shiloh*, and carrying it into the Field of Battle, upon a fond conceit, that the *Philistines* would never be able to face that ever victorious *Ark*, whose Presence alone batter'd down the Walls of *Jericho*; And that it would be a means, to oblige, God to side with them, since his Honour was engag'd in the Preservation of the *Ark of his Covenant*. And that his Glory could not suffer it to fall an inglorious Captive into the Hands of the *Uncircumcis'd*. As soon as the *Ark* appear'd in the Camp, embolden'd with these Thoughts, and flush'd with the sanguine Hope of undoubted Victory, by loud Shoutings, and Demonstrations of Joy, they *anticipate* their imaginary Triumphs; and even before they engage, they congratulate themselves upon the glorious Success of the Day. How vain is Confidence, when ill-grounded, and misplaced! They soon found by sad Experience, that the *Ark of the Covenant*, was no Defence for them, wh

broke the *Covenant*. That the *Ark*, wherein lay inclos'd the two Tables of the *Law*, could not save those, who had broke the two Tables of the *Law*. They found that their Sins could endanger the *Ark*, but not the *Ark* protect their Sins; and that it was to no purpose to court the Emblem, when they had affronted the Original. For notwithstanding the Presence of the *Ark*, they were again totally routed. Thirty Thousand of them fell in the Field; the High Priest's Two Sons were slain; and to encrease the Disgrace of that unhappy Day, to fill up the Measure of their Grief and Shame, the *Ark*, the Ornament of *Jacob*, and the Glory of *Israel*, fell into the Hands of the *Philistines* to complete their Victory, and adorn their Triumph.

Whilst these Things pass'd in the Camp, *Ely* was sitting by the way side, watching: Unconcern'd for the fate of his People, unconcern'd for the fate of his Sons, all his Thoughts were bent upon the Hazards the *Ark of God* was expos'd to, through the Sins of his Nation, and the Sins of his Family. And as good Men at the Approaches of their Dissolution have often Prophetick Fears, or secret Forebodings of some great impending Calamity, his Heart trembl'd for the *Ark of God*.

To draw from these Words some seasonable Inferences or Considerations fitted for the Times and the present Occasion, we think it proper to rank our Thoughts under Four Heads, and shew;

First, The Dignity of the *Ark*, or the high Value of true Religion, and the Duty of preferring its Safety and Preservation before all other Advantages, and Enjoyments.

Secondly, To lay before you some Inducements, and Motives to enforce this Duty.

In the third place, from *Ely's* being both the High Priest, and the chief Magistrate in *Israel*, we will shew you, that this Duty is in a more binding, and particular manner incumbent upon the Magistracy, and the Clergy.

In the fourth and last place, that since the Sins of *Israel* unrepented of were the unhappy Causes of the Captivity of the *Ark*, 'tis the most important of our Duties, to secure and keep it safe in the midst of us by a National Repentance.

First, As to the Dignity of the *Ark* it was the holiest Thing under the *Law*; * and so holy, that made holy every Place it came to. It was the Dwelling Place, and Habitation of God. † It was the Place from whence God gave his Oracles to *Israel*, and where *Israel* met to consult his God. 'Tis call'd here the *Ark of God*, not as a Learned Man || would have it, in Contra-distinction to the *Arks* or Chests made use of in the idolatrous Ceremonies, that were perform'd to the Honour of some Heathen Gods; but because it was of Divine Original, its Fabrick having been order'd by the true God, and adapted to his Service. In many places, it is styl'd the *Ark of the Covenant*; because it was the Pledge of God's Covenant with his People. Elsewhere, the *Ark of the Testimony*; because it was the Preserver of the Testimony of the Lord, the Tables of the *Law* being lock'd up, and preserved in it. In some other places it's call'd, the *Ark of the Strength of God*, and the *Strength of Israel*; because it was a Shield to the People, and a Terror to the Enemies of God. This might suffice to demonstrate the Dignity of the *Ark*, and yet 'tis distinguished by higher Titles. For 'tis also styl'd the * *Face of God*, the *Glory of Israel*, and even God and King of Glory; because God appear'd upon the *Ark* by the visible Tokens of his Presence, Mercy and Protection.

It would be endless to unravel all the *Mysteries* of the *Ark*, and to shew, how it was a typical Emblem of our Lord's Incarnation; as also a lively Representation of his *Mystical Body* the Church: Waving then all this, the

* 2 Chron. 8. 11. † Ps. 99. 1. Exod. 25. 21, 22. || Spence
* Psalm. 24.

tends to illustrate the Dignity of the *Ark*; and hastening to apply this *Law-Ordinance* to our Circumstances under the Gospel, we will only consider it, under a Two-fold *Idea*.

First, As it was the *Symbol* of God's Presence, and the *Pledge* of his Protection.

Secondly, As it was the *Center* of the *Jewish Religion*. For it was before the *Ark* that Sacrifices were offer'd; and the most solemn Acts of Religion perform'd. Whence *appearing before the Ark*, in Scripture Phrase, is of the same import with appearing before the Lord; and there was a *Law*, whereby all the Males in *Israel*, were oblig'd to appear before the *Ark* at the Three great Solemn Festivals.

No wonder then, if the Holy Men under the Law made the Safety of the *Ark* the darling Object of their Zeal, and it's Danger, the chief of their Cares and Troubles; since it was the glorious *Symbol* of God's Presence, and Favour, and the most Sacred and Venerable *Mystery* of their Religion. Let us hear how a Prophet, bewails the Captivity of the *Ark* in a moving strain, and the most affecting Expressions; * *he forsook the Tabernacle of Shiloh, and the Tent which he placed among Men, and delivered his strength into Captivity, and his Glory into his Enemies Hands.*

Now to put this in a Gospel dress; True Religion, the Religion of *Christ* bears the same Relation to us, that the *Ark* did to the People of *Israel*: And if the Care of it's safety did fire their Affections, and cause their hearts to tremble; should not the defence of true Religion against the utmost Efforts of a corrupted Church, kindle our Activity, and enflame our Zeal; since the loss of it, if not of a greater Value, is with us, at least, of the same unvaluable consideration? We lose in it our Sun, and our Shield; our Glory, and our Strength; our Light, and our Support: And this you'll be made sensible of, if you consider Three Advantages attending

true Religion, which are of the same Nature, and Stamp with the Advantages flowing from the *Assurance of God.*

First, *True Religion* is the highest *Privilege* of humane Nature. It distinguishes Men from the whole visible Creation with a brighter Lustre, than all the Advantages of Reason: And if true Religion advances the Dignity of Men, consider'd in a private Capacity, it ought by an undeniable Consequence, to raise the Honour of a Society, of a Nation. A Society, a Nation being nothing else, but a Community made up of private Men, who have agreed to live under the same Laws and Government. Now, if a Kingdom be the Center of Commerce, the seat of Politeness; if it carefully cultivates and improves Arts and Sciences at home, and becomes formidable abroad by the Progress of it's Arms, and the Extent of it's Conquests: They may make a Kingdom considerable in the Eye of the World; but nothing can make it considerable in the Eye of God, or recommend it to his Favour, but the purity of it's Doctrine and Worship.

II. *True Religion* promotes the happiness of a Nation by the natural *Tendency* of it's Doctrines and Precepts. 'Tis in all Communities, the living Fountain of good Order, the Spring of regular Motions, the Cement of mutual Union and Benevolence. It ties the People to the Sovereign: It endears the Sovereign to the People, by enforcing the observance of their reciprocal Duties. It introduces into Commerce *Disinterest* and Integrity; and banishes *Male-administration* from public Places and Employments. It makes the Governors Honest; and the governed easy. Vice, and a corrupted Religion are the unhappy Roots of Evils and Calamities of all kinds; on the contrary, true Religion *|| is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy every one that retaineth her.*

III. *True Religion* entitleth a Nation to God's Favour and Protection. For tho' God is every where, as

God and a King by the immensity of his Nature, and by the unbounded extent of his Providential Administration; yet he is more particularly to be found and felt, as a *gracious God*, and a *good King*, in those Countries, where his *Ark* is settl'd, and his true Church Establish'd: And he honours with a more distinguish'd Care and Protection them, who professing his Truth conform their Lives to the *Sanctity* of his *Laws*. His Presence is inseparable from the *Ark of his Covenant*. Therefore St. *John* in the * *Revelations* represents our Lord in the midst of the *Golden Candlesticks*, meaning thereby, that he fixes his Habitation, and Dwelling-place in Churches, that are distinguish'd by *soundness of Faith*, and *purity of Worship*: And 'tis in regard to the unvaluable Blessings, that a People, whom God hath honour'd with the Knowledge of his Truth enjoys, that the holy Prophet triumphantly saith, † *Happy is that people who is in such a case: yea, happy is the People whose God is the Lord*.

These Three Characters of *true Religion*, are undeniable Arguments of it's Value and Excellency: And at the very same time give us a full Prospect of the Horrors of *Popery*, wherein none of those touches, or strokes are to be seen. *True Religion* advances the Dignity of Man; it improves and exalts his Nature. On the contrary, *Popery* degrades, and vilifies Man by imposing upon him blind Obedience and Submission to pretended *infallible Guides*; as also, the unworthy belief of ridiculous Doctrines, and Superstitions, which once dethrone the Majesty of Heaven, and the Reason of Mankind.

True Religion is not only Conducive, and Instrumental to the regulation and welfare of a Kingdom; but also the very Principle from which Order, Peace, and Happiness flow upon a Nation. But *Popery*, (a Word which implies a World of Mischiefs) bids defiance to all this; it breaks the *Bands*, it cuts off all the Ties of Society; it lays upon *Princes* an Obligation to destroy *Subjects*, whom they are bound upon Oath to

* Rev. I. 13.

† Psalm 144.

protect; it absolves Subjects from their Allegiance to their lawful *Princes*; For, according as it serves its turn, or suits best with its Interest, the Church of Rome at one time will present a *Prince* with a *Consecrated Sword* to encourage him to the shedding of his Subject's Blood; at another, by the *under-hand Intreague* and the seditious Breath of its *Emissaries*, it excites a *deluded People* to levy War against their *Liege Lord* and *Sovereign*.

Again, *True Religion* causes a Kingdom to be the Kingdom of God. But a Kingdom where Popery is the establish'd Religion, is the Kingdom of a Man. Of a Man indeed, who mimicks God. He arms himself with Thunder and Lightning: He demands the Adoration of his own Person: He assumes the Titles of the *Almighty*, and styles himself *King of Kings* and *Lord of Lords*: He affects the Power and Perfections, and even (daring Impiety!) *compliments* himself with the Name of God. What an impious *Level* is this? Proud Worm! who sets himself upon a Level with Him, who is higher than the *Heavens*; and places himself on a Throne equal to the *Almighty's*. Intolerable Arrogance! He is not even satisfy'd with a Equality: He gives himself the Precedency, and affects a Superiority over his Maker. For in the Ceremony of his Coronation*, at a good distance from him, first comes the *consecrated Host* on a white Horse under a Canopy held by Men of no higher Rank than Citizens of Rome. This would have been too sneaking a Retinue for the more than *deified Pontiff*. For, he afterwards comes mounted on the Shoulders of Men under a much richer Canopy, held by *Princes*, or their *Ambassadors*, and *Representatives*. He must own there is a Colour for such a Precedency. For a God made by Cardinals, who are styl'd the *Princes* of the Church, ought in justice to have greater Honour paid him, than those Gods of a more vulgar make who daily come so thick out of the *Mint* of vile inferior

* 1 Lib. Ceremo. Sac.

chiefs. Add, that there is but one *Pope* ; whilst the *Waser Deities*, are multiplied to Millions. Besides, a visible God riding in Triumph with a splendid Equipage, is apt to draw more respect from the *dazl'd* Multitude, than a *latent Invisible* one, who sculks behind the disgraceful Veil of contemptible Accidents, and is crowded into an *Atom* of Bread.

However, a Church which is govern'd by a Man, who unmindful of his mortal Condition, *Rivals* the Almighty ; and even exalts himself above his Maker from being the *Kingdom of God*, is rather the *Em-*pire of proud aspiring *Lucifer*. For God *abhors* and *re-*jects the Proud. But tho' * *he inhabiteth eternity, he dwells with him who is of a contrite and humble Spirit.*

Now, what *Scenes* of Misery and Horrour should be betray'd into, if our *Protestant Religion*, the *Ark* of God, the *Symbol* of his Presence, and the *Pledge* of his Favour and Protection, should be subjected, and forc'd to truckle to its reverse, *Popery* : and if † *power was given to the beast to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.* And 'tis a melancholy Reflection to think, that to him who surveys the present state of *Europe* it will appear, there is cause to be apprehensive of so great a disaster : And that, in many places where our *Holy Religion* flourish'd before, it is now sunk and decay'd, is a Truth too plain to be deny'd.

Abandon'd by a Prince whose Ancestors were its most zealous Champions, and did preside at its Birth and Revival, and defend its *Cradle* with their Sword. Abandon'd, I say by a Prince, who exchange'd it for a temporal Crown, which, for a Reward of his *Apostasy*, hath prov'd to him a *Crown of Thorns*, and still sits tottering and uneasy upon his Head ; Extirpated in *Bohemia* ; Discountenanc'd in many parts of *Germany* ; Distress'd in *Poland* ; Oppress'd in *Hungary* and *Transylvania* : In *France*, where once it was almost an equal

* *Isaiah* 57. 15.

† *Revel.* 13. 7.

Match to its Enemy, bleeding now by fresh Wounds and through a renew'd Persecution; breathing its last And, in these *Realms* insidiously undermin'd by *Subterranean* Plots, pelted with Libels, endeavour'd to knock'd down by the crushing Weight of bulky Volumes and openly assaulted by the bold Partisans of a Popish Impostor. Who can consider the present deplorable condition of our *Holy Religion*, without being struck Heart, without expressing the deepest Concern, without trembling for the *Ark of God*?

And 'tis no small addition to our Fears, that many the Protestant Powers abroad, seem so remiss, so unaffected to the Interest of our *Sion*, while the *Princes* of *Spain* are so Zealous, and Active in the Defence and Propagation of their *Schism*, and *Heresy*. And, at the Head of the latter, who can forbear seeing a Prince who ever look'd upon Conquest as commendable, and Restitution as inglorious; a Prince who is at this time the very Prop of *Babylonish Tyranny*, now as Powerful and as Formidable as ever? Unless we come up to the excessive pitch of Absurdity, as to imagine, that his Majesty hath been weaken'd by the addition of new *Principalities*, and *Dominions*; caus'd to be found light in the Ballance by throwing into it the vast weight of *Kingdoms and Monarchies*; or impoverish'd by securing in his Family the Well-head of *Silver Streams*. Not that I think, his endeavours to weaken our Religion, and advance his own, are owing merely to a Religious Principle: 'Tis not unlikely, they are as much to be ascrib'd to *Politicks* as Zeal, and ought to be plac'd rather to the account of his Ambition, than that of his Bigotry. 'Tis observable, that through the whole course of his Reign, when in a more particular manner (as he doth at this time) he submitted his Scepter to St. Peter's Keys; 'twas when he had occasion for them to open himself a Door into new Conquests and Dominions: And for this very Reason, he'll never leave off endeavouring to settle Popery, and Arbitrary Power in Countries that are in sight of his own, or that border upon his Kingdom, were it but to remove, as far as possible

Wounds, from his People's Eyes his natural and attractive beauties of Liberty, and true Religion; lest the en-joyment of their Happiness of their Neighbours in the enjoyment of their civil and religious * Liberties, should tempt his Subjects to the recovery of their ancient Privileges, and the attempting a Reformation of their gross abuses in point of Doctrine and Worship.

And now, Brethren, is there not a cause to tremble for the Ark of God?

Many, doubtless, have trembling Hearts, busie Heads, and are full of disquieting Thoughts. But what do they tremble, what are they solicitous for? Alas! alas! there is but too much reason to believe, that Concerns merely temporal lie at the bottom of their anxious fears, that worldly Cares are the secret Springs of their Uneasiness and Trouble. They tremble for the Ark of Mammon, and not for the Ark of God. They are solicitous, not for the Sanctuaries of the Lord; but for the Ware-houses and Magazines of their Avarice. This is the true Principle of their Trembling. Here enter and terminate all their Fears. And, if at any time, they cast a thought upon the Condition of the Protestant Church, they are apprehensive of the danger of Religion merely for views of State, instead of being concern'd for the danger of the State by views of Religion: And had not the Providence of Kings and Parliaments by wholesome Laws, which are the celebrated Monuments of their Wisdom and Piety, rais'd the Religious and Civil Society in these Realms, upon the same Stock and Foundation, linking and twisting the Church and State together so; that they cannot be parted without being a mutual Bane one to the other; I am afraid very few would think of the Ark of God.

Our Religion is essential to our Constitution, inso-

*Sape ex eo audiui, Legionem unam, & modicis auxiliis, debellari, ob-
vique Hiberniam posse, idque etiam adversus Britanniam profuturum,
omana, ubique arma, & velut à conspectu libertas tolleretur. Ta-
in Agrec. cap. 24.*

much, that they, who are well affected to our *Constitution* must needs be *implicitly* zealous for the Church. But something more is requir'd : Doth not so great a Blessing, as the Preservation of the *Ark*, merit a distinct Consideration, as well as an *explicite* Prayer. Doth not the Kingdom of God, which we are Duty bound to seek first of all, deserve a first Rank and a *Prebeminence* in our Thoughts, and Affections. And as God loveth the Gates of Sion, more than all the *Dwellings of Jacob*, ought we not to love the Church to love true Religion above all ? This, Holy David look'd upon to be his Duty : O Lord, saith he, *have loved the Habitation of thy House, and the Place where thine Honour dwelleth.* This ought to take place of all the Enjoyments of this World. † *The Ark, saith Uriah, and Israel and Judah abide in Tents, the Servants of the Lord are in the Camp, in the open Field ; and shall I go down to my House to eat and drink, and to be merry : as thou livest, and as thy Soul liveth, I will do this thing.* This is the most affecting of all Concerns : Witness the good Man in our Text : He prefers the Safety of the *Ark* of God before the Safety of Israel, before the Safety of his Two Sons, and before the Safety of their Wives and Children, *His Heart only trembled for the Ark of God.*

II. This leads me to the Second Head of this Discourse, where I am to lay before you, some Inducement and Motives to enforce this Duty.

The First Motive, or Inducement for us to be concerned, and to tremble for the *Ark* of God, is a deep Sense of God's Honour, and a true Zeal for His Glory. This was in all Ages of the Church, the over-ruling, the predominant Affection, the Master-Passion of Holy Men. As they had a Propriety in God, their Interests were the same, and they made His Cause their own ; insomuch, that the least Thing which in the Eye of the World might tarnish

* Psalm 26. 8.

† 2 Sam. 11. 11.

Honour, or sully the Glory of his Power, fill'd them with sore Affliction and bitter Sorrow. Of this Nature was the Zeal of *Moses*: And tho' he was the meekest Man upon Earth; yet when the *Israelites* had made a Golden Calf, whilst he was with God in the Mount, his Jealousie burnt like Fire; and in an holy Zeal he broke the Tables of Stone, and put the same Day, Three Thousand Men to the Sword: And seeing, that God purposed to destroy that idolatrous Nation, Root and Branch, he intercedes for them upon no other Motive, but the Consideration of God's Honour, and Glory. O Lord, (saith he to his God) * *Why meth thy Wrath wax hot against thy People, which thou hast brought forth out of the Land of Egypt, with great Power, and a mighty Hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say? For Mischief did he bring them out, to lay them in the Mountains, and to consume them from the face of the Earth: Turn from this fierce Wrath, and repent of this Evil against thy People; yet now see if thou wilt forgive their Sin: And if not, blot me I pray thee, from the Book of Life which thou hast written.* That is, put a sudden Period to my Life, that I may not hear the insulting Voice of the Idolatrous Nations: Let me never be a Witness of the blasphemous Rejoycings of the Enemies of thy Name.

Like unto this, was the Zeal of the great Prophet *Elijah*. He beholdeth prophane *Jezabel*, priding in the Success of her Abominations, and applauding herself that she had establish'd the Idolatry of her Native Country upon the Ruins of the Altars of the Lord. From those Objects which deeply wound his Heart, he flies into the Wilderness; and takes Sanctuary in a Rocky Cave. What doest thou here *Elijah*, saith the Lord to him; I have, answereth the fiery Prophet, I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Hosts: For the Children of Israel have forsaken thy Covenant, thrown down thine Altars, and slain thy Prophets

with the Sword: O Honourable Passion! O Glorious Zeal, which hath nothing in view, but the Honour and Glory of God!

Of the same Stamp and Character, was doubtless the Zeal of *Ely* in our Text. If we could lay his Heart naked to your Eyes, you would be convinced, that it was a deep Sense of God's Honour and Glory, which caus'd his *Pious Tremblings* and Religious Fears.

He hath it in his Thoughts, that it is highly injurious to God, prejudicial and disreputable to his Religion, that his *Ark* should fall into the Hands of a Nation that *knew not God*. His Tremblings, his Agitations, in short the devout Agony of his Soul give us sufficiently to understand; that the following disquieting Thoughts ran in his Head, and troubled his Mind. Shall I see the *Ark* of God reduc'd to the despicable abject Condition of being a Slave to *Dagon*; and the *Glory of Israel* in Chains raise the Triumph of a vain senseless Idol? † O God! shall the *Adversary* reproach, and the *Enemies* blaspheme thy Name? These *Pious Transports*, and Religious Ejaculations, which are the commendable *Raptures* of a true Zeal for the Honour of God, ought to be the Sentiments of every Christian, when seasonable, and well-tim'd. When intricate *Functures*, unsettled *Affairs*, divided *Friends* and powerful united *Enemies* make us reasonably apprehensive of the Church's Danger or Downfal; 'tis every good Protestant's Duty, in Imitation of Holy Men, to break out of a deep Concern for the *Glory of God* into these, or the like Expressions. Shall we see *Jerusalem* subjected to *Samaria*; or *Babylon* the *Queen of the Nations* reckoning our *Sion* in the number of her *Slaves*? Shall we see *Truth* gagg'd and fetter'd, by prevailing *impious Falshood*? And the *Holy Gospel*, bury'd under a scandalous Heap of *human Traditions*, and *Counterfeit Legends*? Shall we see the D

usurp again in these Kingdoms, the regain'd Em-
 pire of *Christ*? Shall we see the *Roman Pontiff* seated again
 in the *Temple of God*, resettle his *Idols* in the *House of the*
 Lord? Shall we see *Rome* successful in her *towering Pro-*
 spects, and ambitious Views, trample upon the *Ark of*
 God, raise her *Throne* above the *Heavens*, and scornfully
 look down upon us, *where is now your God*?

These, or the like, ought to be the Sentiments, and
 transports of a *true Protestant*; when there is reason to
 fear, that the Interest of a false Religion will prevail
 against the true Worship of our Lord. Then, he ought
 to tremble for the *Ark of God* out of a deep Sense of
 God's *Honour and Glory*.

Secondly, We should tremble at the Danger, and
 concern'd for the *Ark of God*; if we did seriously
 reflect upon the deplorable State of a Nation from
 which God Almighty withdraweth his Presence, and
 Protection, together with his *Ark*, or the Purity of
 his *Doctrine and Worship*. 'Tis a notable saying in an
 ancient † Author, that the greatest Calamity a good King
 can threaten his disobedient Subjects withal, is to forsake
 them, and leave them to their own Devices and Ma-
 nagement. Then certainly, the sorest Punishment that
 God can inflict upon a *Rebellious Nation*, is his Absence,
 withdrawing from it.

What a wretched Condition must they be in, when
 they have lost their God, that *ever-flowing Fountain* of
 consolations and Comforts, in their several Miseries
 and Afflictions; the *infallible Oracle* which they consul-
 ted in the emergent Difficulties and Intricacies of
 Government? Bereav'd of their *Ark*, their *Altars* and
 Religion; where must they make Application, for Ad-
 vice, Help, and Remedy? Depriv'd of the *Mercy Seat*,
 and *Throne of Grace*, where they us'd to resort to ap-
 pease an injur'd and angry God; how can they escape
 being made Examples of his Justice, and *Victims* of his
 vengeance?

† Flo. us.

Consider what would be the Face of Nature, if the Sun did refuse his favourable *Aspect*, and the Heavens withdraw their *cherishing* Influences, and kind Showers. It would no more be deck'd with its beautiful green no more enamelled with the rich variety of Fruits and Flowers; and destitute both of the solid and agreeable Ornaments of its Plenty, it would only offer to our View, the *shocking* and hateful Spectacle of Barrenness and Desolation. Such, and infinitely more deplorable is the State of a Nation from which the Almighty withdraweth the *Light of his Countenance*, and the helping Hand of his Protection; together with the visible *Symbols* of his Presence and Favour. This Kingdom, we live in, this Kingdom, which is as delightful as the Garden of Eden, this *Earthly Paradise* would immediately turn'd into a frightful and *ghastly* Wilderness, if God should root up, and take away the *Tree of Life*, which is both its *Safeguard*, and *Glory*.

How vain would it be for us to pride in the Fruitfulness of our *Soil*, whilst through the Want of our Knowledge of God our Hearts would be uncultivated and our Souls barren?

How simple would it look for us to glory in the Wealth of our Commerce; whilst by the Loss of our *Ark*, we had lost all Commerce and Communication with *Heaven*?

How silly, and impertinent, to boast of our *Liberties* (suppose, that after we have forfeited our Religion, we can keep up our *Liberties*; since in the Opinion of sensible Men, they are a mutual Shield and Preservation to each other, and they must stand and fall together. How silly, I say, and impertinent, to boast of our *Liberties*, whilst through *Ignorance* and *Corruption*, occasioned by the *Absence* of God, and the *Subtraction* of his Light and Influences, we become Bond-men and Slaves, to that *Spiritual Tyrant* the Devil?

In short, should the Almighty remove his *Ark* from the midst of us, what would we of this Kingdom be but a numerous Community of *blind Men* roving without a Guide in *Egyptian Darkness*, in our way to

re, if the *Darkness*, where there is *weeping and gnashing of teeth*?

Such being the deplorable, and wretched Condition of a People, whom God deprives of the visible Tokens of his Presence and Protection; how concern'd ought we to be for the Preservation of the *Ark*? How trembling and troubl'd, when we are apprehensive of the great Hazard of its Loss or Captivity?

The Third Inducement, or Motive which obliges us, to be concern'd and tremble for our *Ark*, is the *known and avow'd* Character of its *Enemies*.

And here, what an odious and frightful Object strikes my *Fancy*, and offers to my *Imagination*? I see a *Monster* with a threatening Voice, and *bagard* Looks; holding a *burning Torch* in one Hand, and a *destroying Sword* in the other; trampling upon the *Gospel*; surrounded with a *Legion of Angels of Darkness*; follow'd by a rueful attendance of *arm'd Missionaries, and booted Apostles*. Curiosity leads me to enquire into the Name of that *venomous, and blood-thirsty Creature*: I am readily answer'd that the *Monster's* Will and Pleasure is to go under the Denomination and Style of the *HOLY, CATHOLICK, APOSTOLICK, and ROMAN CHURCH*.

But further, I am willing to be appriz'd of the *Feats and Achievements* of that ill-favour'd, *affrighting Creature*: In order thereto, I search the *Records*, and look into the *Annals* of former Ages; there I find her tumbling down mighty *Emperors* from their *Thrones*; slaying the greatest *Kings and Princes*; bathing herself in the *Blood* of slaughter'd Nations; sporting with the *Murders and Massacres* of mangl'd and butcher'd *Christendom*; kindling the *Flames* of intestine Divisions and *civil Wars*; involving Kingdoms in *Distractions*, which undermine their *Government*, and plunge a wretched People in the wild *Confusions* of *Anarchy*; building the *Prisons* of the *Holy Office*, upon the *Model* of *Hell*; inventing new and exquisite *Tortures*, to *excruciate* them, who refuse to comply with their abominable *Errors in Doctrine and Worship*; and destroying with *Fire and Faggot*, those to whose charge no other Crime can be laid, but that

that innocent one, of not being able to digest palpable Contradictions, and impossible Falshoods. These, as we learn from History, have been for many Centuries past, the Apostolical Proceedings, of that Apostolick Church. And oh! had it been the Almighty's Pleasure, that our only Knowledge of this Church's sanguinary and barbarous Actions had been meerly from the musty Records, and worm-eaten Chronicles of distant Ages! But alas! In our Days, how many bloody Tragedies hath she acted, and caus'd to be acted on the several Stages of Europe. How many gloomy Scenes of Horrour; owing to her Cruelty, are yet fresh in our Memory? How many still, stand expos'd to our View? How many glaring Instances have we seen, and do we still behold of her Barbarity and Bloody-mindedness?

'Tis strange, that so many Hundred Years, wherein she glutted her self with Innocent, and truly Christian Blood, could not assuage her Malice, and allay her Cruelty with some mixture of Mercy: 'Tis strange, that so many Ages spent in sucking the Vein of the best of Men, could not weary her, and instead of an abatement, should procure such an Encrease of Inhumanity, as transcends and overtops all her former Barbarities. Which is a plain Demonstration, that that Church is no *Changeling*; that in the accustomed course of her Proceedings, she is so much inur'd to, and harden'd in those wicked Practices, that it is impossible for her to lose the Habit, or alter her bloody Measures: And we have reason to fear, that she will rather rise, than sink in her Sanguinary Methods of dealing with those, they brand with the odious, but undeserv'd name of *Hereticks*. * *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots?* they may that Church do well, that is accustomed to do evil. † *Can horses run upon a rock, or one plow there with oxen?* then may that Church execute justice, that hath turn'd

* *Esay.*† *Amos.*

ment into Gall; and do uprightly that hath turned righteousness into Hemlock?

And indeed, we should forfeit our Senses, did we entertain vain and flattering Hopes of seeing that Church, or any of that Church, depart from their inhuman, and violent means of Conversion. For in so doing, they act upon Principle. Persecution is imbo-
d in that Religion, and is no less essential to true Po-
etry, than Love and Charity are to pure and uncorrup-
ed Christianity. For the *Expoliation* and Murther of
Hereticks, or even of Heretick Princes, or of such as are
look'd upon to be *favourers of Heresy*, have been en-
acted into a Law, and made one of their fundamental
Doctrines; not only by the *Bulls* and the *Constitutions*
of their Popes, but also by formal decrees of no less,
than Six of their *General Councils*.

'Tis observable, that in the same Council (that
of Latran, under *Innocent III.*) wherein they intruded up-
on the Church, that *Novel, new coin'd Forgery of Tran-*
substantiation, as a true Christian Doctrine; in that very
same Council, they made the bloody decree, whereby
the Pope's Vassals, or Partizans of the *Holy See* were
commanded to Prosecute with Fire and Sword all
heretics, who having their Senses about them, would not
submit to the most unaccountable Determinations of
the Church.

Violence and Persecution were truly the sole Ar-
guments, or the only proper means, that could be
made use of, to oblige People to give a feigned Con-
sent to a Doctrine, which shocks the common Reason
of Mankind, and defaces and extinguishes all the No-
tions and Idea's of Truth. For, since it could not be
imagin'd, that sensible Persons could be brought to
allow that *magick Metamorphosis* of a bit of Bread
into an *Almighty God*, the good Fathers of that pious Coun-
cil, thought fit to thrust it down their Throats with Daggers
and Firebrands.

* The Council of Latran, under *Innocent III.* of Lyons, under *In-*
nocent IV. of Constance, under *Martin V.* of Sienna, *IV.* of Latran,
and several more. See Richer. Histor. Concil. Gener.

But

But, besides the strict Commands of destroying *Hereticks*, laid upon them by the *Bulls* of their *Popes*, and the decrees of their general *Councils*; we must not omit that every *Bishop* at his *Consecration*, and every *Metropolitan* at his *Installation* takes an Oath, whereby he solemnly promises and vows, to persecute them who shall refuse to pay *Homage* and *Faith* to the *Roman Pontiff*, or to own his pretended boundless Power and Authority. The Words are remarkable, and are as follows; * *Rules of the Holy Fathers, the Apostolick Decrees, Ordinances and Disposals, Reservations, Provisions, and Mandates, I will observe with all my Might, and cause to be serv'd by others. Hereticks, Schismaticks, and Rebels to said Lord the Pope or his Successors, I will to my Power Persecute and Oppose.*

Thus the *Prelates of Rome*, with the formality of laying their Hands upon the *Holy Gospel*, bind themselves to act contrary to the *Spirit of the Gospel*. They unchristian themselves, in order to be qualified to be the *Rulers of Christendom*; and cease to be *Christians*, when they commence *Bishops*. 'Tis a kind of an *Apostacy* from *Christianity* to *Mahometism*. For certainly, such an Oath hath the Stamp of the *Arabian Impostor* upon it; and suits better with the Character of a *Mahometan* *Murderer* than with the Temper and Genius of a *Christian Bishop*. And indeed, who is the greatest Criminal, who imposes that abominable Oath, or he who swears up his Conscience to take it, is a hard matter to determine: And yet harder is it to think that you can see so much as one *Bishop of that Church*, but you may mark him as a *Tormentor* and *Destroyer of Men up to the Oath*, and one that is Sworn to be the *Worryer of his Flock*, and a *Blood-sucking Bonner*.

* *Regulas sanctorum Patrum, decreta, ordinationes, seu dispositiones, reservationes, provisiones & mandata Apostolica totis viribus observare & faciam ab aliis observari, Hereticas, Schismaticas, & rebelles a Domino nostro, vel successoribus praedictis pro posse persequar & imminabo.* See the *Roman Pontifical*, set out by order of *Pope Clement VIII.* and Printed at *Antwerp Anno 1626.* p. 59. and p. 86.

I own there have been some *Prelates* in that Church, in whose generous Breast, good Nature and Charity have prevail'd, against the malignant influences of the Allegiance they Swear to the *Pontiff*, and who, by good Offices done to *Hereticks*, have broke that Oath, without being chargeable with Perjury. For 'tis rather Perjury to keep it; since 'tis a Breach of the *Baptismal Vow*, as it is an entrance into a Profession, which teaches and commands us to love our Neighbours as our selves, and to follow the Example of our Saviour *Christ*, who came not to *destroy Men's Lives, but to save them*. But, tho' there have been amongst them, some *Prelates* of Temper and Moderation; yet 'tis matter of Fact, as well as matter of Grief, that in that Community few have been the Instances of honest *Bishops*, who have had *Christianity* enough to break that *Anti-christian* Oath.

These are, Christian Brethren, these are the Enemies who always aim'd at the total Subversion of our Church, and who dayly threaten our *Ark* with Fetters and Captivity. What would become of us all, what an *Ueldama*, what a Field of Blood (remember the *Man Days*) would this Island be turn'd into, if by their usual Artifices, and Stratagems; by the help of traitors at home, and false Friends abroad; those pious Men became at length the Conquerors and Masters of our *Ark*? And then what a Religious Concern, what fearful Tremblings and restless Agitations must our Hearts be in at the sight of that affrighting bloody *view*; tho' they were not near us, tho' we view'd them at a distance?

Terrible is the thought of a Nation's falling a Sacrifice to the *Vatican Idol*, and being made a Prey to his *voracious Priests*. Terrible is the thought of falling into the hands of *Jesuits*, who like their *Patriarch, the Devil*, are *Lyars* and *Murderers from the beginning*, and break the *Laws of their Institution*. Terrible is the thought of falling into the Hands of *Prelates*, who are bound, by their Oath, to torment us into their *Idolatrous Worship*;

ship; and Sworn to our utter Ruin, and Destruction.

'Tis matter of Wonder, and Astonishment, that some among us, who call themselves *Protestants*, should, as much as in them lies, open our Gates to the irruption of *Rome*, by levelling their Wishes, Hopes, and Endeavours, to the settling here an *out-law'd Popish Successor*. In order to succeed in this infamous Project they palliate, and mince the Horrors of that Religion. They blaze about, that danger from that quarter is but an idle Story, and a Bug-bear for Children; and that we may live safe and quiet, in the enjoyment of our religious and civil Liberties, tho' *Popery* be at the Helm. Whether these wild *Politicians* be real Church of England Men, or only Protestants in *Masquerade*, and Angels of Darkness under the disguise of Angels of Light, for Reasons best known to themselves: Whether it be *Delusion*, or *Design*, *Madness*, or *Treason*; whether the Distemper lies in the Head or the Heart, 'tis now needless to discuss. And, 'tis a sufficient Confutation of that strange Conceit, to remind you of what was laid down before, that *unrelenting Cruelty* is the Characteristic of the Church of *Rome*; that no term of Years, no change of Times, no consideration or inducement whatsoever, can mitigate her Rage, and blend her Fury; and tho' they appear at first in *Sheep's cloathing*, they will soon after prove *ravening Wolves*. It would be vain, to expect the least alteration in their Principles. In spite of flattering Fancies, and deceitful Imaginations, *Popery* will still be *Popery*; *Jesuits* will never cease to be *Jesuits*; *Papist Princes* will never fail to be Enemies to the true Religion. And for my part, I would no more trust to a *Popish King's Coronation Oath*, than I would to a declar'd Bankrupt's Bond.

And suppose God Almighty, to be avenged of our many national Sins, and more particularly of our Ingratitude* to our late glorious Deliverer, whom

* Φεῦ ἦς Θανόντες ὡς παχέαι πε βροτῆς
Χαίεις διαρρέει καὶ πρὸς αἰῶνα

Destru-
ent in time of need to rescue us from Bondage and
Oppression, should accomplish the designs of those Men,
who wish for a *Popish Successor*, (which is the greatest
Curse that can light upon this Nation,) we may depend
upon it, we should soon feel the *Father*, in the pretended
Son; and perhaps it might be our ill Luck, that he would
play the same Game over with more Management, and
better Success.

However, we ought to thank those Men for the wise
and noble Expedient, which they start to cure our Fears,
and quiet our Minds; for in the depth of their Wis-
dom, they have found out, that the best way to curb
Popery, is to *Crown it*: That the properest means to wea-
ken its Power, and put a stop to its Progress, is to
place it upon the Throne, and arm the *bloody Monster*,
with the *Sword of State*.

The *Bishops*, who compil'd the Thanksgiving for the
Fifth of November, were better acquainted with the true
Character and Spirit of *Popery*, than those Men. For
there was an Article in the Prayer, that ran thus; *To*
that end strengthen the Hands of our gracious King, the No-
bles and Magistrates of the Land, to cut off those workers of
iniquity, whose Religion is Rebellion, whose Faith is Faction,
whose Practice is Murthering of Souls and Bodies, and to root
them out of the Confinnes of this Kingdom. Behold Popery
drawn to the Life! Behold the true Features of Popery!
and doubtless those worthy, and truly *Protestant Pre-*
lates, when they inserted this Article in the Prayer,

Εἰ σε γ' ὁδ' ἀνὴρ ἔδ' ἐπὶ σμικρῶν πόρων
Αἶας, ἔτ' ἰχέϊ μνηστῖν, ἔ σὺ πολλὰ κίς
Τὴν σὸν περ τεύων, ἀφ' ἑκαυτὸς ἰσχυρὸν δοεῖ.
'Αλλ' οἴχεϊ δὴ πάντα τούτ' ἐφ' ἑμυδρία.

Sophocl. Ajace Mastig.

How soon ungrateful Man forgets a Benefit!
Soon as the dying Hero falls to Earth,
The good dies with him, and is lost in Death.
Thy noblest Labours are no more remembered;
Thou art forgot by him, O *Ajax*! Him,
Whom thou hast oft defended with thy Life.
But this is now as tho' it ne'er had been.

had it in their thoughts to hang a Picture of that abominable *Religion* in every one of our Churches, in order to create, and inspire a general Aversion to it. And 'tis unaccountable, how it came to pass, and for what Reason a *Primate* of this *Kingdom* snatch'd this useful Picture out of all our Churches by striking those *significant Words* out of the Office ; and one would think, it would have been more for the advantage of this Nation, and that *Archbishop's* honour, if instead of blotting out that *Sketch of Popery*, he had added to it some finishing masterly Strokes, and rais'd it with stronger, and more lively Colours.

And since now, we are debarr'd putting up that Petition to Heaven in our religious Assemblies ; let it be one of the main Articles of our Closet Prayers, and private Devotions: Let us daily entreat the Almighty with Earnestness and Zeal, to root them out of the *Confines* of this *Kingdom* ; or else we must expect, to be rooted out of it our selves. For, if they are suffered to get a Footing in this Island, farewell our *Ark*, farewell our *Liberties*, farewell our happy Constitution in Church and State.

Struck with a deep Sense of the liveliest Repentance, and profoundest Humility, we confess, O Lord, that by our manifold Sins, we have rais'd the Storm of thy Indignation ; and if thou wouldst inflict upon us Punishments proportionable to the Heinousness of our Offences, we can expect at the hands of thy Justice, but the severest Judgments that ever drop'd down from Heaven to crush a wretched sinful People. Even the best of us, tho' not Actors in the gross Impieties, which kindle the Fire of thy Vengeance ; yet have we been, and are still guilty of Sins, tho' of a smaller nature, which add Fuel to thy Wrath : Spare us, O Lord ; grant an Act of Grace to this guilty Nation, for the sake of thy Name, for the sake of that Primitive Christian Religion, which, by the Labours and Blood of many glorious Martyrs, hath been reviv'd among us.

* But if 'tis decreed, that our Sins must not go unpunish'd ;

* King Henry VIII. had inserted this Article in the Litany, From the Tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, and all his detestable Enormi-

Thunder and Lightning, let Fire from Heaven
come, and destroy us; let Pestilence poison the Air we
breathe, and the Angel, who is the usual Minister of thy
vengeance, strike us dead by Thousands in our Streets:
let the Bowels of our fruitful Land be turn'd into Iron,
and our smiling Heavens into Brass. Let an outrageous
hurricane blow Death, and Destruction upon us, and bury
us under the ruinous heaps of our Houses. Let the Ocean,
breaking through, and overflowing Banks and Dykes, let in a
deluge upon us, and make a Sea of this Land, rather O
God, than we should be given up a Prey to those mer-
ciless Enemies of our Ark and Religion. Let us fall
into the Hands of the Lord, for his Mercies are great;
and let us not fall into the Hands of those Men.

Now if we consider and lay to Heart the Three
temptations, or Inducements which have been offer'd to our
Faith; we must, like the High Priest of our Text,
be humble for the Ark, and look upon the danger that
threatens our Church, as the main object of our Reli-
gious Zeal, and Fears. The Holy Man sat upon a
hill by the way side, waiting impatiently for the suc-
cess of the Battle, when comes a Man, who first of all
informs him, that Israel had fled before the Philistines;
and that there had been a great Slaughter among the
Israelites. This piece of News, how doleful soever, he
receives with a serene Countenance, and without giving
any outward marks of Sorrow, or Trouble: The Man
then acquaints him, that his Sons were slain in the
Battle; but the account of their Death, doth not so

Good Lord, &c. Popery was there in it's proper place, with Pe-
rice, and Famine, and the other great Calamities of the World.
This Petition was struck out of the Litany in Queen Elizabeth's Days.
The good Queen thought, I suppose, that those Words, in the place
where they were put in, would shock the Roman Catholicks; and 'tis well
known, that she made it her Business to render the publick Acts of the
Church of England, as agreeable to all Parties, as Truth would permit.
There is no room for the Reasons, which oblig'd Queen Elizabeth
to strike these Words out of the Service; I wish, they were reinserted in the
Service, for Reasons which I forbear to alledge, because they are obvious

much

much as stir his *Paternal Bowels*, and is too light a concern, for a Heart filled, and wholly taken up, with the imminent danger of the *Ark of God*: And this gave a very noble instance of; for as soon as the Master told him, at the close of his short *Narrative*, that the *Ark* also was taken, immediately Grief seizes upon him, his Strength fails him, his Heart breaks, and sinking under the crushing weight, of the only Affliction he could not bear, he falls and dyes. *And it came to pass*, saith the inspir'd Historian, *when he made mention of the Ark of God, that he fell from off his Seat backward by the side of the Gate, and his Neck brake and he died.*

Now, (which God in his infinite Mercies avert!) should sudden and unexpected News come, that *Popery* had invaded the Land, that the *Holy Places* were defil'd, and *Idols* inthron'd in the *House of God*, I am afraid our lukewarm *Protestants* would not Copy after the *Holy Man* in our Text; and would rather supinely out-live the greatest Calamity, that can befall this Kingdom, the loss of Religion, or the captivity of the *Ark*. But, if after that a Report was spread, that the same Enemy was shutting up the *Exchequer*, confiscating their Estates, and that effectual means were taken to restore all the *Church Lands* in their Possession, to the several Orders they formerly belonged to; how struck, and confounded, how concern'd, and aggriev'd would they be at the News? Oh! then they would bestir and intreague themselves! Oh! then they would give signal Tokens of Life and Activity; and shew, by their striving to prevent the loss of their Possessions, that their temporal Concerns lie nearer their Heart, than the Condition of the *Ark of God*!

I would not be so understood, as if I blam'd any Body for defending his Property, or asserting his legal Title to his Estates, and Possessions: My Meaning is, that a due Preference ought to be given to the sacred Concerns of Religion; and that the safety of the *Ark of God* is to be the chief of our Cares, the main Article of our Prayers, and the top of our Wishes, and Endeavours.

curs. * If I forget thee, O Jerusalem: let my right hand
 forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue
 cleave unto the roof of my Mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem
 above the chief of my Joy. Let us walk in the Steps, and
 follow the Example of Holy Men, who Pray'd, and
 asked for the Peace of Jerusalem; and were earnestly
 solicitous, and zealously affected for the Ark of God.
 Let us, through a fervent Zeal, for the excellency of
 our Doctrine, and the inestimable Blessing of true
 Worship among us, atone and make amends for our
 past indifferency and insensibility. And, as we hope
 that we will have occasion to be *active* in the defence
 of our Religion, no otherwise, than by the flames of
 our Devotion, and the fervency, and importunity of
 our supplications to Heaven; 'tis one of our principal
 Obligations, as we are Christians, as we are Protestants,
 to endeavour by our Prayers, and Deportment, to en-
 gage the Almighty in the Interest of all the Protestant
 Churches in general (and particularly in case it should be
 attack'd) to appear visibly, as he hath done many times
 before, in the defence of that Church by Law Establish'd,
 which hitherto hath been the Glory and Bulwark of the
 Reformation, and with which all the Protestant Churches
 abroad must sink and fall. (I hope here, Brethren,
 our Hearts will go along with my Words, and Wishes)
 May this Kingdom, where the *fugitive Dove* hath found
 a safe shelter from *Birds of Prey*, ever rejoyce, in the
 delightful enjoyment of God's Ark and Prophets. May
 this Island, whose Glory 'tis to be, in a manner, the
 native Country of the *Reformed World*, and which hath
 so kindly admitted to it's Bosom, and Embraces, those
 unfortunate Children, whom their Mother had dis-
 own'd, and thrust out of their paternal Houses;
 may this Island ever be Bless'd with the continuance of
 God's Presence, and true Worship: May, for the reward
 of her unexpressible Charity to the poor distress'd Pro-
 testants, may pure and undefil'd Religion, in the midst of

it, survive all future Ages, outlast this visible World and never end but with commencing Eternity.

But, if God should ever suffer those *merciless Men* have a Rule over this Nation; may we have a better Destiny, than that, which by Providence, was allotted to the *High Priest* in our Text. He died with the quieting thoughts of the *Ark* of God being taken from profane Hands; of *true Religion* being Defeated by Idolatry; of the insulting Boasts, and impious Triumph of Heathenism and Superstition. Gloomy, Disconsolate, Terrible Ideas, for a dying, holy Man! which embitter the last Instants of his Life, sharpen the Agony of his Death, and bring his *grey Hairs down to his Grave with a mighty Sorrow*.

I humbly hope the Sentence is not gone from God against us; but if it be resolv'd by Providence, that at one time or other, this Island is to be deliver'd into the hands of our modern *Philistines*, I will Petition the *Almighty*, that I should not fare like *Ely*, or share the hardship of his Fate; that at my dying Hour, I may go off the Stage of this World with the comforting Thoughts of leaving behind me a *free prosperous Nation* and a *safe flourishing Church*. May the *Pangs of Death* seize upon me, and lay my Body to the Dust, before *'tis reported in Gath, and proclaimed in Askelon, the Ark of God is taken, and the Glory is departed from Israel*.

III. Now, to enforce what hath been hitherto laid down; let us in the third place from *Ely's* being both the *High Priest*, and the chief Governour of *Israel*, shew that this Duty of Trembling, and being zealously Affected for the *Ark* of God, is in a more particular and binding manner incumbent upon the *Clergy* and the *Magistracy*.

First, As to the *Clergy*; who should be more Zealous for the *Ark*, than they who by a select Calling, and honourable Ministry, are appointed to carry the *Ark* and whose Life, with the Solemnity of awful Ceremonies and Oaths, is Consecrated to it's Service? And certainly, the Vows and Engagements of our Profession are but insignificant Trifles, or grave and solemn In-

positions upon the World, if we, above all other Men, are not oblig'd to look to it's Safety, to be concern'd at it's Danger, and boldly to appear in it's Defence. For if the *Ark* of God was lost, what would become of the *Clergy*? And if the *Clergy* should neglect it's Preservation, humanly speaking, what would become of the *Ark* of God?

'Tis then our indispenfible Duty to watch like the good Man in our Text, and tremble for the *Ark* of God. And, that God may bless our Endeavours for the Preservation of the *Ark*, one thing is necessary; that is, that we act by *sanctify'd Motives*, and *spiritual Views*. GOD FORBID, we should ever make good the Opinion, which the wretched *new Fangled Sect* of the *Free-thinkers* scandalously entertain of the whole Body of the *Clergy*.

For they analyfe all our Zeal for Religion into *Priestcraft*, as if our *Godliness* was but another Word for *gain*; our *Ark* was our *Diana*; and we were Zealous for it's Preservation meerly upon the account of temporal Advantages, which flow upon us from that Head. GOD FORBID, that Men, who by the ties of their profession, are engag'd to recommend *Heavenly-mindedness*, should be themselves so much *Worldly-minded*. This would be a sure way of losing our Religion. For was for that very thing, the Sons of *Ely* making a band of Religion, and Priesthood to enrich themselves, that God suffer'd the *Ark* to fall into the Hands of the *Philistines*. But as it highly concerns us to wipe off that vile Aspersions they cast upon us, I am humbly of opinion, the best method to solve the Objection, the best defence we can make, is to shew by our disinterest, that the Churches Incomes and Profits are not the end we propose to our selves; that we look upon them only as means of supporting us in our spiritual Labours; and that, abstractedly from Livings, and Dignities, we have nothing more in view in the Discharge of our Office, than the Safety of the *Ark*, the Honour of God, and the Salvation of Souls committed to our care.

E

One

One Word more of these *Free-thinkers*: I must own, that I suspect many of them to be *Rome's Agents*, and *Missionaries in Disguise*; notwithstanding the wide difference of their Principles. How far distant in it's Doctrines and Practices is *Quakerism* from *Popery*? And yet we know to whom we owe the rise, and growth of that unchristian Sect. *Popery* is resolv'd to be reestablish'd in this *Island*, no matter how. For the regaining this *Kingdom*, was always it's principal Aim; because of all Countries, that separated from it's Communion 'twas the most gainful before reform'd; and that here lay the greedy Pontiff's *Peruvian Mines*: And if it cannot re-enter at the usual Gate; it will try to come in again at the back Door of *Free-thinking*, *Infidelity*, and *Atheism*.

GOOD GOD! who can express the Horrors that fill our Minds at the thoughts of a Religion, which makes *Atheism* it's Harbinger? A Religion, that teaches Men to renounce the belief of a God, in order to plunge them into *Idolatry*; and obliges a Nation to abandon the Service of the Lord their Maker, to make them Slaves to a Priest! Was ever a true Religion Propagated, and Advanc'd by such impious means: And is not this very Consideration a strong Inducement to add to the warmth of our Zeal against *Popery*?

But who can entertain a mean Opinion of our Country's Zeal against *Rome*, that remembers what pass'd lately? Can any body have so soon forgot, that at a time when *Popery* had ascended the Throne; when *Jesuits* were lodged in *Royal Palaces*, and when *Fryers* of more than one sort had the Impudence to shew themselves in the Streets of our *Metropolis* in their Habits, (which would have been a Comical sight, had not a bloody Tragedy been conceal'd, and actually hatching under the ridicule of their Dress:) When Colleges were invaded, and turn'd into Seminaries of *Idolatry*; in short at a time when *Laws*, *Liberties*, *Religion*, our all lay at Stake, the Ministers of the Church of England stood in the Gap, and by their unanswerable Tracts, as also their Courage in *Suffering*, and *Resisting*, made a no

Stand for the Defence and the Preservation of the Ark of God?

And here, we cannot pass by a glorious instance of their Zeal, which will be upon Record, and transmitted to late Posterity; that is, that excepting Two or Three, all the Tracts which were then Writ in the Vindication of the *Protestant Religion*, were all *Arrows shot from the Quiver of the Church of England*. I would not be so understood, as if I had a Design of upbraiding our dissenting Brethren with Remissness, or want of Zeal for the *Common Cause* against the *Common Enemy*: I rather think that their silence on that occasion, was an *Homage*, which they paid to the superior Abilities of our *Clergy*; and that when they saw our *Tillotsons*, *Stillingsfleets*, *Sherlocks*, (not to mention some great Men still living, and who now govern the Church, they then so well defended,) engag'd in that defensive War, they modestly thought it would have been high Presumption in them to imagine, that such *matchless Champions* wanted their help.

But how defective would our Zeal be against *Papery*, were it confin'd to Writing? We out-write them in *Divinity*, but they out-wit us in *Politicks*. They'll let us write on, and go another way to Work. Our Authors have beat them in the *open Field*: But they'll endeavour to defeat us *under Ground*. If we raise against them, a *Battery of Arguments*; they'll reply by *Battery of Engines, and Contrivances*. Is it time to wage *Paper War*, when *Hannibal* is reported to be at the gates; when, as it appears by *Royal Proclamations*, his *Enemy Friends* raise an Army in our very Bowels? Can Pens be of any Defence against Swords and Dag-

At such a Juncture, the best way to shew our Zeal, Concern for the *Ark*, is in imitation of, and out-respect to our *gracious Sovereign*, who hath assur'd us from the Throne, that she had nothing more at Heart,

Bishop Tenison, Bishop Wake, and some others.

firmly and affectionately to stick by the *Protestant Succession*, as by *Law Established*. And here, I crave leave to Address you in the Words of a great Man, * lately made a *Primate* of our Church; a Man, who being universally esteem'd, hath made all Parties to conspire and agree to his excellent Character, and who by our Posterity, together with the *Basils*, the *Nazianzens*, and the *Chrysostoms*, will be ranked among the chief Fathers of the Christian Church. "Whoever, saith that great Man, doth not adhere to the *Protestant Succession*, let him go under what Profession, or Denomination he will, is a certain Enemy to our Church, and State, and sets open a Door, as far as he is able, for *Poper*, and *Arbitrary Power* to enter in at. Against both which the *Protestant Succession*, is the only human Bar, after *Her Majesty's Life*, which GOD LONG PRESERVE; nay, and which makes it more valuable, it is a very great Security, to that most important Life too, which we all have so much Reason to Wish and Pray for the long long continuance of. We are all sure sufficiently convinc'd, by our own late experience, as well as by the Reason of the thing self, how impossible 'tis for us, to be in any manner of safety under the Government of a *Popish Prince*. And therefore, methinks, we cannot but be firmly resolved, and united against such an one; especially one that must bring a *French Power* along with him, and hath been all along Educated, and formed according to the *French Model*: But I shall not insist any longer upon this Point, which we are all obliged by the strictest ties of *Law* and *solemn Oath*; nay, and if we understand our own Interest better too, to be true to.

Such are the Thoughts, and Words of this excellent Prelate: I hope, all of us will be brought by Arguments, to follow his Steps. How forcible the

* The Archbishop of York, in a Sermon preach'd before the city of Cambridge, 1705.

asons, and how venerable the Example! But, may
 ere be so bold as to tell you *in passing*, that nobody
 ill believe that we are Zealous, and Hearty for
 e Protestant Succession; * while we appear fond of
 e Doctrines, which by a necessary and immediate
 onsequence, Arraign the late glorious Revolution, Pave
 e way to a fatal Revolution of another Stamp, tie up
 e Hands of the Protestants, and lay them disarm'd,
 en and naked to the Roman Knife.

There is another thing of great Moment, and high-
 onducing to the preservation of the Ark; that is,
 at far from widening the Breaches of Dissention,
 from improving inconsiderable Divisions into civil
 ds, and publick Fermentations; we study to settle a
 rt, and Harmony between all the Protestants of this
 dom, notwithstanding differences in † Opinions, so
 they may all be linked into one common Interest
 inst the common Enemy, and may joyn their Heads
 prevent, and their Hands to remove common Dan-
 'Tis every good Man's Wish, that we should all
 United in one common Bottom. But since early
 possessions; Prejudices; strong, tho' ill grounded,
 gnificant Scruples; Misunderstandings, some Un-
 untary, some Wilful, have to this Day prov'd in-
 cible Bars, to that perfect, long wished for Union,
 e the Nation is not yet ripe for, or worthy of so
 at a Blessing, 'till it pleases God to send us from

*Abest enim à Tyrannide consensus universorum, sine quo nullum ra-
 & justum imperium. Unde, quod commodo civium fieri possit, li-
 sane Rempublicam à Pradone repetere, ne cunctorum opes & salus,
 rum aut unius cupiditatibus vel libidinibus devoveantur. Etenim
 sacrosancta Libertas, & Divini Juris, quippe Humana à Deo
 ata Natura, ut tam tentare scelus sit, impium circumvenire, occu-
 esarium.*

vincent. GRAVINÆ isti & Antecessoris Romani Orat &
 ula, Specim. Prisci Juris, pag. 255, 257. Ed. Trajeß. 1713.

B. A Man, Born and brought up in the very Center, both of Spiritual
 mporal Slavery speaks like a Briton, while some Britons here speak
 te like Roman Slaves.

it was in 88,

Heaven such a general Peace in Religion it is in mean while, our Duty to find a way, to knit our Hearts if we cannot unite our Minds; and whilst we dissent in B matters, to agree in that most important Point, the Safety of the *Ark*, or the Preservation of the *Protestant Religion*.

Such an Union, tho' defective, would be of sufficient force to Baffle the Designs of *Popery*, which cannot gain Ground here, but through our animosity and fallings out. Such an Union would be to us a stronger Bulwark, and Security, against a foreign Invasion, than the watry *Ramparts* of the surrounding Ocean, and the so much boasted of wooden Walls of our Fleets.

Secondly, The Duty of being concern'd for the Safety of the *Ark*, and trembling at it's Danger, is also in a more particular and binding manner incumbent upon *Magistrates*.

In all Ages of the Church, *Magistrates*, (under the Sovereign, who is the Fountain of their Power) have been look'd upon to be the *Nursing-Fathers* of the Church, and the Supporters of the *Ark* of God. But, 'tis here to be observ'd, that 'tis more particularly the Office of the *British Magistrates*. For, as several *Penal Laws* have been enacted by the Legislature, for the Power for the Safety of the *Ark* against the encroachments, and outrages of *Popery*; so 'tis the *Magistrate's* Duty to put them in Execution: And as *Ely's* neglect in the discharge of his Office was one of the Reasons, which oblig'd the Almighty to deliver his Church into the Enemies Hands, it behoves them to take care that our *Ark* should not suffer through their remissness in the discharge of theirs.

The *Romanists* brand the *Penal Laws* enacted against them with the odious Name of Persecution. A wrong Name indeed, when one knows the Grounds and Reasons of those *Laws*!

For *Popery* doth not fall under the Lash of the Law, as 'tis a Compound of erroneous Belief, and ridiculous Worship. In this respect, 'tis as much beneath the Cognizance of the Law, as the wild Imagination

en confin'd to a Mad-house. Let them know, that we do not Prosecute them; because they believe that a God is their God; or because they devoutly kiss a benefactor's Bone, when they think, they are paying the Veneration to the Relick of a Saint. No, we prosecute them, because their Religion is *Tyranny*, *Reason*, and implies and commands the utter Subversion of our *Church*, and *State*. The *face of our Laws* bent against them; because they are *Traitors* to their Country, and *sworn Vassals* to a foreign Enemy, who is always seeking to bring this Nation into Thralldom, and Oppression. They are *Proscribed* by our *Laws*; because *Papists* cannot be loyal Subjects. For *no Man can serve Two Masters*; and they must prove perfidious Ser- vants to their *Master at home*; because they are bound to obey the Orders of their *Master abroad*, and will obey their *King*, if the *Pope* requires at their Hands a *royal Victim*.

In all well regulated Countries a *profest Atheist* is proscrib'd by the *Laws*; because by the denying the *Being*, and *Providence of God*, he *saps the Foundations of Government*: And what difference is there betwixt an *Atheist* and a *Jesuit*? We may apply to the latter, that * *Tully* saith of an Antient Philosopher. *Epicurus in verbo ponit, re tollit*. Their *Maxims* are equally *impious and Atheistical*: And it would be easy enough to prove, that *Mariana's* Principles are as Destructive to *Government*, as those of † *Vaninius*.

Then what the *Romanists* call *Persecution*, is nothing more, but a due Prosecution of *Treason*, *Villany*, and intended, if not Executed *Parricide*.

GOOD GOD! who would have thought, that the Authors of *Holy Murthers*, *Religious Crusadoes* and *Meri- cious Massacres*; that the Contrivers of the *Gun-powder Plot*, and the *Fire of London*, would have complained of the severity of our *Laws*? Is it because they lie *Dormant*, and are seldom put in *Execution*?

De Nat. Deorum. † One burnt alive at Thoulouse for Atheism in 1619.

'Tis hop'd, they will now have some Colour to complain; since our Magistrates have been lately awaken'd into the Execution of their Office by a Royal Proclamation: And indeed, if those Men are any longer the *Monuments* of our Clemency; we will soon find our selves the *Victims* of their Cruelty.

But where doth my Zeal; where doth my Concern carry me? I forget, that I have the Honour to speak before *Magistrates* well affected to their Country, and Zealous for their Religion; who know what Clemency ought to give place to Severity, and when Severity is to be temper'd with Clemency: And I know, that, as it hath been shewn before, tho' there be abundant reason to Tremble for the Ark of God yet, when I see in the Church, such a *bright set of truly Protestant Bishops*; in the Courts, such a *glorious Bench of truly Protestant Judges*, the reviving Prospect raises my drooping Courage, dispels my gloomy Thoughts: And I thank God from the depth of my Heart, who hath been graciously pleas'd to set *Two* such *strong Fences* round our Church to secure, and guard it on every side.

The Ark is safe there: But alas! It is in Danger in great Danger from another quarter; I mean of national Sins.

IV. Which brings me to the last Head of my Discourse, where we are to shew that since the Sins of *Israel* unrepented of, were the unhappy Causes of the Captivity of the Ark, it behoves us to secure, and keep it safe, in the midst of us by a *National Repentance*.

National Repentance do I say? Then farewell our Assurance. Can any such thing be expected, or thought of at this time? Is there any hopes left of such a Change while an Egyptian darkness of Vice and Corruption have over-spread all the Land.

Yes,* there is Hopes still; and thanks be to God,

* This Exhortation to Charity, was put in at the desire of the Reverend Mr. Pocklington, Minister of Chelmsford, and the Trustees of the Charity School, lately set up in that Town.

can perceive the *dawning* and *breakings out* of such a Reformation, *darting* upon this Nation. For how can we look upon those pious Establishments, the *Charity Schools*, which have been set up in so many parts of this Kingdom, and despair of such a happy Change. Are not those Schools the *Earnests* and *Pledges*, and even the *powerful Instruments* of such a general Conversion?

How comforting are these thoughts! We are thereby satisfied that there is amongst us still, many good *religious Souls*, who not content to be the *vertuous Models* of this *present Generation*, endeavour by such *pious Settlements* to entayl their good Principles upon posterity, and furnish the Generations to come, with *examples of Virtue* like themselves.

Again, we see a very great number of Children nurtured in the Faith, rooted in the Grounds of the *Protestant Church*, furnished with a competent Share of Learning, which will render them capable of *Confirming* themselves, and making a further progress in the Principles of *Religion*; from which, with God's favour, will flow through the course of their life a continued Series of good Actions, and whereby they'll be enabled, jointly with other well-meaning Persons, to *stem the Tide of Corruption*.

But further, I look upon these Schools to be the strongest supports of the *Ark*: They are as many *Citadels* raised against *Popery*. *Julian the Apostate*, one of the worst Enemies to *Christianity*, thought the likeliest way to destroy the *Christian Religion*, was to suppress the *Christian Schools*. Considering what he aimed at, he went the right way to work. For certainly, Ignorance was the best Preparation for *Christians* to run back to *Heathenism*. And so 'tis for *Protestants* to be run back to modern *Paganism*, *Popery*: For *Popery* sprang up in the Darkest, the most barbarous Ages of the Church. The Enemy sowed those *Tares* in the Night, when Men were asleep. And 'tis still kept by the same Ignorance, that gave it Birth. But the means of these pious Establishments, the mean-

est of the Land will attain to such a Degree of Knowledge, and Learning in the *Scriptures*, as will fix them in their Religion, and prevent them from being seduced by *Popish Agents and Missionaries*: These Charitable Schools will scatter, through this Land, such Beams of light, as will beat back approaching Darkness, and shut out that Ignorance which is the usual *fore-runner* of *Popery*. Since settling Schools of this kind, is properly raising *Fortifications*, against the common Enemy. As we tender the Safety of our *Ark*, the Well-fortification of our Country, as we abhor *Popery*, and love our *Religion*, let us spare no cost to encourage, maintain and improve those *Charitable Institutions*.

Here I beg leave to direct my Discourse to you, (to Inhabitants of this Town) to Congratulate you, upon your *rapid* and happy Success, in the setting up of your School. I hope you have all been unanimous in the Project, and the Execution of it. For it would be hard to think there is among you any *Dissenter*, in point of Charity. The Duty of Almsgiving is a *Gospel-obligation*, and not a Ceremony of the Church of England. But, if peradventure there is such *Recusants* in the midst of you, they must be put in mind, that when at the Bar of the great *Judge of the World*, they will be called to an account for so considerable an Omission: it will be but a poor Plea, to say in their own Defence, that they would not join with their Town Men, for the observation of the most *essential* Precept of the Gospel, because they could not join with them in some *Circumstantial*s of Worship.

If any of these Men are here present, I entreat them by the Bowels, by the Compassions of *Christ*, and for the Interest of their own Souls, to consider that the omission of a great Duty is a great Sin, that they have done wrong and injure themselves, in neglecting to be partakers in the Honour, and Blessing of Feeding, and Cloathing the Lord: And I am of opinion, whatever may be theirs, that in order to make amends for being *Demurrers* in so good an Action, they ought to do *Penance*, *Tax themselves*, and that to atone for their delay,

criminal reluctance to so pious a Work, they ought to come to the Altar with a richer Offering, and a costlier Sacrifice.

The sight of those Nurseries of your Benevolence is an Honour to this Town, and an Ornament to this Church. And the Musick performed by those Children, best resembling that of Heaven, because it passes through innocent organs, as it is most acceptable to God, who loves to be praised by the Mouth of Babes, so is it a most ravishing Harmony to pious Souls.

One thing, however, abates of the fineness of the spectacle, that the Boys are not clothed alike: I do not take notice of this, with a design to Censure you, ye Inhabitants of this Town; for you deserve to be commended for the great Expences you have been at already, for the noble advances you have made for this charitable Settlement, rather than to be blamed for that defect.

I mention this only as an Introduction, to the Application I am now to make, to you, Gentlemen, who are here occasionally present. And I apply myself to you with great Assurance, because I am satisfied, that English Gentlemen who are distinguished from Men of like Figure in other Countries, not only by their Abilities, but also by their Inclinations to do good, will never baulk those Instincts to Beneficence, planted in their Hearts by Nature, and strengthened by the happy Culture of a Liberal, and Religious Education. And such is generally their Generosity, that they think themselves kindly, and honourably used, when they are invited to share in the Acts of Christian Benevolence: And at the very time, that we in justice thank them for their Liberality, they thank us for the Invitation; especially, if it is to such a Charity as is, like this, calculated for the Publick good, and eminently serviceable to the Wellfare of their Country.

Strange would it be indeed, that at a time when such large Encouragements are given, such ample Contributions raised, for prophane Singing upon the Stage, we should think much to bestow some small inconsiderable

derable Sums, which cannot Burthen or Incumber us upon so pious an Undertaking, as the improving the Musick of our Churches, which can't be effected by no properer way, than by training up these Children to be the *Representatives* of Angels upon Earth, by singing *tunefully* to the Honour of God, the Songs of our *Sion*.

Three *Classes* may be made of Persons present here: some come to joyn with us in our Devotions, some merely out of Curiosity, and some others for Business.

As to them of the first *Sort*, who came hither purely to joyn with us in our Devotions, we have nothing to remind them of, we leave them to their own *good Principles*: For Charity is the inseparable Companion of true *Devotion*. And when such Person's Hearts, like *Lydia's*, are by *God's Grace* opened to his Word, we need not fear but their Hands also will be opened to the several Wants of their needy Brethren; and more particularly, to such Charities as tend to administer *Spiritual Nurture* to their fellow Creatures.

But as to you who came hither, merely led by Curiosity, I must put you in mind, that tho' it be a good *Action* to come to Church, yet you have marred it in it's *Principle*. How then, how thankful ought you to be to Almighty God, who now offers you an occasion, to *mend the fault*, and to sanctify your *prophane coming* in to this Church, by your Christian Liberality at the going out.

Lastly, I must give a Word of Advice to you who came hither for Business. As you are Christians, you are doubtless convinced that you cannot be successful in any thing you have in Hand, except God's Favour and Assistance goes along with you. But it would be in vain to expect God's help, and Blessing, if you do not shew your selves kind and courteous to God, by assisting these poor Children, who represent your Lord and your Redeemer. * *Come then and pay unto the Lord your God, and let all them that be round him here, bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.*

This is a Day of Justice. Is it inconsistent to make it a Day of Mercifulness and Charity? Why should not those Virtues be united in the same Day, since they are to be united in our Hearts, and go Hand in Hand in our Conversation? for * *the Lord requires of us to do justly, and to love mercy.* Let it be said that this Day, *Mercy and Truth met together, and Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.*

To conclude, I desire you all to consider, that Charity is the *gracefullest* of Christian Graces, and that this Branch of it, which we now Recommend unto you, is the best sort of Charity; for it feeds the Soul as well as the Body, and furnishes the Objects of it, with Provisions for this and the next Life.

And 'tis to be hoped, that for the sake of those pious-disposed Persons, who will shew themselves the Children of God, by the Imitation of his Benevolence and Mercifulness, God will protect our Ark, and ever defend it from the *Hellish Mint* of Horrid Plots, Intestine Bloody Wars, Barbarous Foreign Invasions, I mean from *Romish Zeal, and Bigotry.* Now to God, &c.

* Micah 6. 8.

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